



Michigan Department of Community Health
Health Facilities Engineering Section
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EYEWASH/DRENCH SHOWER BULLETIN

Healthcare facilities may be required to install plumbed eyewash/drench shower systems in certain areas to comply with regulations of the Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG), Division of Occupational Health (MIOSHA). Two recent inspections of hemodialysis units by MIOSHA resulted in citations related to the lack of eyewash stations in the treatment room. The reprocessed dialyzers, which are opened and rinsed in the treatment area, contain a sterilant which was considered an injurious corrosive material.

Occupational Health Standards for General Industry, Chapter IV, Part IV, Rule 4401(3) states... “Where the eyes or body of any person may be exposed to injurious corrosive materials, suitable facilities for quick drenching or flushing of the eyes and body shall be provided within the work area for immediate emergency use”.

Injurious corrosive materials are defined as caustic compounds of a pH of 9.0 or greater, or acid compounds of a pH of 4.0 or less in solution. There are some exceptions to this definition. However, undiluted solutions of bleach, certain cleaning compounds and other materials such as sterilants may be considered injurious corrosive materials and an eyewash/drench shower facility would be required.

Suitable eyewash/drench shower facilities must comply with performance standards stated in ANSI Z358.1-1990. Many hand held, portable or self contained eyewash units do not meet this standard and plumbed units would be required. Portable, self contained eyewash devices which meet the following performance criteria are acceptable; a) flush both eyes simultaneously, b) have a “stay open” feature allowing both hands free to hold eyelids open, and c) deliver not less than 0.4 gallons per minute for 15 minutes.

Questions regarding this issue should be directed to the Division of Occupational Health, Michigan Department of Labor & Economic Growth (DLEG) at (517) 322-1608.